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ABSTRACT

This monograph attempts to use the results of research to help answer teachers' practical questions about teaching techniques and instructional materials in the teaching of reading in the secondary schools. Chapters include: "About Successful Reading Programs," which discusses the all-school developmental program, temporary compromise programs, selecting students and scheduling classes, and examples of promising programs; "About Practices in Teaching Reading," which treats developing vocabulary, improving comprehension, improving speed, improving tastes and appreciations, grouping, and evaluating growth; "About Reading and the High School Student," which examines concerns of high school youth, individual differences, reading interests, and interrelationships between reading and other factors; and "About Materials for Teaching Reading," which considers books, booklists, textbooks, workbooks, graded materials, subject-matter texts, and audiovisual aids. (RB)

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What We Know about High School Reading

Prepared by the National
Conference on Research in English

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SECONDARY READING SERIES: INTRODUCTION

What Does Research in Reading Tell the Teacher of English in the Secondary School?

M. Agnella Gunn
Professor of English Education
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IN the teaching of reading—

> If to *do* were as easy as to know
> What were *good* to do—

the following series of articles would have little justification. But knowing "what were good to do" as well as how "to do" it is far from easy for the English teacher who is faced with the problem of becoming, perforce, a teacher of "reading." To help him in this process and to bring some practical answers to his urgent questions, the following series of four articles on the teaching of reading was planned.

The practicing English teacher is by the very nature of his work a consumer rather than a producer of research. Consequently, he needs access to the results of pertinent studies, realistically interpreted in terms of the classroom. This series, therefore, attempts to go beyond objective reporting of the results of research and experimentation, and focuses on implications for the classroom teacher. It attempts to sluice off the flood of research data so as to help irrigate the classroom soil.

Why is such a series as this needed at this time? The reasons are many. An important one is that the teaching of reading, as such, on the secondary level is still so new that excellent, experienced English teachers, whose preparation was largely in the field of literature, are confused and frustrated on being faced with the necessity of teaching basic reading skills for which they had little or no preparation and which, in earlier "halcyon" days, they blithely took largely for granted.[1] Helping busy teachers prepare themselves to do a job that is already upon them makes imperative such helps as efficient in-service training and the use of practical professional materials based on sound theory. It is to the latter need that this series of articles is directed.

What are the causes of the new demands being made on the teacher of English? Again the causes are many, but changes in the teaching of English and reading should be viewed in the context of much larger changes. Two of the most significant ones are the

[1]Current studies show meager but encouraging evidence that the programs of colleges and universities which are preparing teachers of English for the secondary schools are gradually including in their programs specific preparation in the teaching of reading.

changes in the size and in the nature of the secondary school population. Numbers of pupils unprecedented in the history of education anywhere on this earth are flooding into the secondary schools this fall as enrollment figures reach all-time peaks. This trend has been growing for some years. The general population of the United States tripled from 1870-1940; during that same interval the secondary school population became ninety times as large. After World War II there was a tremendous increase in the number of children in the population. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of pupils being retained in school who formerly would have been dropped. In 1870 three out of four high school graduates went on to college; one out of four did not. But by 1940 three of four pupils did *not* go on to college; only *one* out of the four did go on to college.

Even more important than the change in the size of the school population is the change in its nature or character. This stems in part from a modification of our philosophy of education. Our attitude toward the purpose of the secondary schools has altered basically. No longer is their main function conceived to be, in effect, the providing of a proving ground for the academic pupil who is headed for college. Today their function is also considered to be the providing of a training ground for the pupil whose abilities are more limited or more "practical."

The resulting changes are of great consequence to all teachers but to teachers of English and reading in particular. Promotion policies have been altered, new non-academic courses have been added, and "drop-outs" have decreased as the less academic pupils are attracted to the newer offerings. Not all people concerned with education approve of these changes. In general they are regarded in two ways. Some consider them the logical and natural result of the assumption by the school of a necessary dual role. Others regarded them as a destructive retreat from responsibility for intellectual development. Basically, the dilemma may be expressed in two questions: (1) Should the schools provide the particular kind of education which develops the leaders of cultivation and of intellect who are essential to the preservation of our society? (2) Should the schools provide the kind of education which trains practical men whose development is carried in the direction and to the extent indicated by their needs and abilities?

The battle lines are drawn and the high-decibel argument continues. But quietly throughout the nation's schools, teachers are looking this two-headed problem squarely in both of its faces and are seeking ways to solve it. The easy, obvious solution of educating either one group or the other is completely untenable to those idealistic and realistic teachers who believe in education for all American youth. But teachers, probably better than anyone else, know that this does not mean the *same* education for all youth. Acceptance of the only possible alternative, therefore, has entailed a gradual re-tooling of the entire educational machinery, a process which was predictably uneven and is still incomplete.

The third change grew out of the other two. Stemming from the size and the heterogeneous nature of the "new" school population are the changes necessary to adjust teaching to the range and variety of individual differ-

ences which that population represents. Undertaking the almost overwhelming responsibility of educating all youth does not imply less emphasis on the education of the intellectually able or gifted, but it does imply that old patterns of teaching relatively homogeneous pupils had to be changed, and new ones devised to meet the new demands. That seemingly innocuous sentence is loaded. What must these new patterns be? Can we dream up ones which will retain the values of academic education for the few and at the same time provide non-academic training for the many? If the answer is *yes*, what are the variables, what are the constants in these new programs? Because our schools are essentially reading schools where success, regardless of the kind of education being sought, is dependent upon reading, it is one of the important constants, and the reading program assumes major significance.

What are the changes which bear directly on the English teachers and the teaching of reading? Primarily, there are two. One is the cluster of changes resulting from increased research into the process of human growth and development. For example, we know that growth is a continuous process. We know that intellectual growth is one part of this process; and that pupils' growth in language power, and therefore growth in reading, is a facet of total growth. We know that the reading program should therefore be planned so as to provide for continuous growth from kindergarten to twelfth grade and beyond. We know more about the importance of motivation both in learning and in retention.

A second cluster of changes bearing directly on the teaching of reading results from our increased knowledge of the nature of the reading process itself. For example, we know that certain basic skills must be learned first before certain other higher-level skills are attempted. We know that inferential, critical, or creative thinking about written material requires comprehension of that material. We know that appreciation, satisfaction, or delight in books presupposes a grasp of reading skills. This implies many things, among them that we must build the necessary basic skills as we require intellectual reactions to material; that we use varied reading methods and materials appropriate to the wide range of student abilities; and that we develop understandings, skills, and tastes at all levels of reading ability.

How then can we help to close the gap between what we know and what we do about reading? One way is by translating sound theory directly into modified practice, by answering questions that teachers ask in terms of the actual classroom.

What kinds of questions do teachers ask about reading? Their questions fall largely into four categories, with overtones of classroom sounds instead of the sounds of tabulating machines. For example, teachers ask about *programs* in reading. They ask, "What are successful high schools doing about organizing their reading programs?" "What is the successful balance among all the strands of the reading program?" "How do elementary and secondary teachers plan a kindergarten-to-twelfth-grade program together?" "Who coordinates it all?" "How do the teachers of the other subject-matter areas come into this picture?"

Teachers ask about *practices* in

teaching reading. They ask such questions as, "How can I teach literature when I have to stop and teach vocabulary?" "What shall I do in a class that ranges all the way from gifted youngsters to slow learners?" "I can manage to teach basic skills fairly well, but how do you actually teach taste and appreciation?" "How important is speed in reading?" "How should I challenge my really top-notch pupils?" "What are the best ways to evaluate pupils' growth in reading?"

Teachers ask about *materials*. They ask such questions as, "What books should I use with my ninth-grade boys who read on the fourth-grade level?" "There must be good factual material and good literature which is both easy and interesting. Where can I find such materials?" "Should I be using a basic textbook or workbook?" "In what way do machines help?"

Teachers ask about *pupils*. "What are the causes of the pupil's success or his failure in reading?" "Of all of the individual differences that youngsters have, which are the ones significant for reading?" "In what ways are tastes linked to skills and abilities?" "What are the effects on the pupils of success or failure in reading?"

How does this series help answer these teachers' questions? The articles are organized around these four topics:

What Does Research in Reading Tell Me —

—about Successful Reading PROGRAMS?

Dr. Margaret Early of the Reading Clinic at Syracuse University discusses:

- The All-School Developmental Program
- Temporary Compromise Programs
- Selecting Students and Scheduling Classes
- Examples of Promising Programs

—about PRACTICES in Teaching Reading?

Dr. Constance McCullough of the San Francisco State College discusses:

- Developing Vocabulary
- Improving Comprehension
- Improving Speed
- Improving Tastes and Appreciations
- Grouping
- Evaluating Growth

—about PUPILS in Relation to Reading?

Dr. John J. DeBoer of the University of Illinois discusses:

- Concerns of High School Youth
- Individual Differences
- Reading Interests
- Interrelationships between Reading and other Factors

—about MATERIALS for Teaching Reading?

Dr. Helen Hanlon of the Department of Education of Detroit, Michigan, discusses:

- Books
- Booklists
- Textbooks
- Workbooks
- Graded Materials
- Use of Subject-matter Texts
- Audio-Visual Aids

In summary, this series of articles about reading, sponsored by the National Conference on Research in English, attempts to use the results of research to help answer teachers' practical questions about "what were good to do" and how "to do" it in the teaching of reading in the secondary schools.

WHAT DOES RESEARCH REVEAL

About Successful Reading Programs?

Margaret J. Early

WHO teaches reading in the secondary school? A study of current programs indicates that the answer seems to be the English teacher and the special reading teacher. Who *should* teach reading in the secondary school? The varied answers to this question emphasize the *if's, and's,* and *but's* that riddle any discussion of a balanced reading program at the secondary level. Authorities agree that every teacher should be a teacher of reading, but they point out that this desirable goal is far from being achieved, largely because subject-matter teachers lack training in reading methods. When the need for adequate reading instruction is felt, administrators and teachers look for leadership from the English department or a reading coordinator in organizing an all-school program in which every teacher adjusts his reading assignments to the range of ability in his class and teaches the reading skills necessary for understanding his subject.

Reading programs vary according to the size of the school, the type of community, the abilities of the pupils and their needs now and in the future, the curriculum offered, the attitudes and skill of the teachers, the size of the staff, and the consultant help available. No one pattern can be described as "most likely to succeed." Furthermore, experience with reading programs in the high school is still extremely limited. Most of those reported in the literature are fairly recent developments, and few practices have been evaluated in objective experiments. Promising practices and trends on trial are the most that can be reported at this early stage.

Nevertheless, even in this dawn of reading at the secondary level, light is available from two sources: sound theory and practical experience. Administrators and teachers in the planning stage of program development can find useful guidance in (1) the recommendations of reading specialists and (2) the experiences reported by those who are now trying out various schemes. This paper will summarize findings from these two sources.

THE ALL-SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

If the various types of reading programs that have been suggested by competent authorities or tried out in actual practices were arranged according to comprehensiveness of approach, at the top of the ladder would stand the all-school developmental program. Such a program provides for:

1. Continuous instruction in reading skills from kindergarten to grade twelve for *all* pupils
2. Integration of reading skills

with other communication skills: writing, speaking, and listening

3. Specific instruction by subject-matter teachers in *how to read and study* in their special fields, using the basic reading materials of their courses
4. Cooperative planning by all teachers so that skills will not be overlooked or overstressed
5. Adjusted reading materials in all subjects for slow, average, and superior students
6. Guidance in free reading
7. Emphasis on the uses of reading as a source of information, as an aid to personal and social development, and as a means of recreation
8. Corrective or remedial instruction for seriously retarded readers
9. Measurement of growth in skills by means of standardized and informal tests; study of students' application of techniques in all reading tasks
10. Evaluation of the uses of reading through study of the amount and quality of voluntary reading; study of effect on achievement in all school subjects; effect on percent of drop-outs

Behind each of these requisites lies a tangle of problems that makes it clear why the *all-school developmental program* is "easier said than done." For example, numbers 1, 3, and 4 imply that teachers at all grade levels and in all subject areas not only must understand how human beings grow in their ability to read, but that they also must have the technical know-how to contribute to this growth. The implications of the second criterion are equally intense. Teachers must see reading not as an isolated tool, but as one phase in the complex process of communication. Understanding the nature of language and agreeing that education in any field, no matter how specialized, is dependent upon skills of communication are basic planks in a platform for reading improvement. But teachers who have achieved a philosophic understanding of their responsibility to teach reading still need to know how to translate that understanding into action.

Involved in the fifth criterion of a total program are issues that go much deeper than those involved in how to teach reading. A thorough-going reconsideration of the offerings of the content fields is preliminary to achieving an all-school developmental program in reading. Too often subject-matter teachers look upon a reading program as a means of bringing every pupil up to grade level. They think that instruction in reading should make it possible for all pupils to use the textbook around which their courses are built. Or, as they decide to discard the single-textbook method, they look for easy vocabulary materials that present the same concepts as the standard text, and they are disappointed when they find none. It is questionable whether teachers have the right to ask for low-vocabulary materials in their subject fields until they re-examine the concepts they include in their courses of study and decide whether the same concepts remain when complex topics are rewritten in easier vocabulary and sentence structure.

The remaining criteria carry heavy implications, too. Numbers 6, 7, and 10 point to the ultimate purpose of all reading instruction: promoting wider use of reading. Fundamental though specific skills are to the reading process, a program which focuses only on skills is severely limited. Broadening the program to include enthusiastic attention to the uses of reading demands the active participation of all the faculty in building the resources of school and classroom libraries. It brings the librarian to the fore in this phase of the program.

The inclusion of number 8 suggests that even in the best developmental program there will be some students who need more specialized individual instruction than can be provided in the regular secondary classroom. Provision must be made for students who, for reasons other than low mental age, have disabilities that can be diagnosed and treated.

Evaluation of a total program in all its aspects is implicit in the last two criteria. Accurate interpretation of the results of standardized tests presents a problem to many teachers. A still more complicated lesson for teachers to learn is how to build reliable informal tests and keep accurate observations of the less tangible evidences of reading growth.

Some of the ten criteria presented here demand from teachers new understandings of the role of language and of their responsibilities toward its development. Out of these understandings must come fundamental changes in course offerings. All of the criteria demand the learning of new teaching techniques. Changes in attitude, in methods of teaching, and in curricula evolve slowly. Since a realistic all-school developmental reading program must wait upon the carefully reached decisions of committees of teachers in each content field, it is easy to see why temporary, compromise plans have been initiated in most schools that have attacked the reading problem.

COMPROMISE PROGRAMS

In an attempt to provide systematic instruction in reading before a total program has been fully developed, many secondary schools offer special classes in reading (see references). In some cases these classes are additions to the regular curriculum. Frequently they are labeled "developmental" to show that they provide for all pupils—slow, average, and superior—at a given grade level. Sometimes they are called "corrective" when they are designed for students with specific reading disabilities. When individual or very small group instruction is provided for retarded readers, the program is sometimes designated as "remedial," although this term has fallen into disrepute because it carries unattractive connotations.

In place of the regular English course, corrective classes sometimes are offered for a semester or two. This type of program is different in objectives and organization from the type described next.

Another common approach, especially in smaller schools, is to charge English teachers with the responsibility of developing the reading skills

of all students as part of the regular English courses. Occasionally, especially in the junior high school, the teaching of reading is a specific area of instruction within the core course or, as in one laboratory school, an integral part of a problem-centered core (25).

Emphases differ and variations occur within these patterns, but essentially these four types—the special reading class, the substitute English class, instruction within the regular English class, and developmental reading as part of the core course—are the practices commonly recommended and followed.

Selecting Students and Scheduling Classes

Whenever the program is less than "total," decisions must be made as to how students will be selected, how classes will be scheduled, and who will teach them.

The easiest type of program to plan is the reading-within-the-English-class. There is no need to schedule extra classes and no additions need to be made to the staff. Instead of the selection of some students for special classes, the problem becomes that of grouping all the students for English classes. In large high schools where administrative grouping is feasible, the recommendations of Gray (6) can be considered. He suggests developing a program around the needs of five types of readers in the following manner:

Needlessly retarded readers, comprising those students who read far below the level of their ability and have no recognizable handicaps, should have intensive instruction adjusted to their specific needs, preferably during first-semester English.

Handicapped readers, those who have retarded language and speech development, limited backgrounds of experience, serious emotional disorders, and disturbing parental relations, should be grouped together in special English classes limited to ten or fifteen students.

Mentally retarded or *slow learners* are most effectively helped in language arts classes adjusted to their respective levels of advancement and rates of learning.

Superior students, in regular classes, should be challenged by differentiated assignments.

Students of average ability, making normal progress in reading, should continue to receive reading instruction within regular classes.

Decisions must be made as to the placement of and emphasis on skills in a course of study for reading-within-the-English-class. One example of a four-year sequence is that suggested by Davison (3):

Grade 9. Flexibility of rate; reading for various purposes; reading of charts, maps, graphs, etc.; locational skills; recognition and use of simple sentence patterns; development of a two-level outline.

Grade 10. Organizational skills with emphasis on recall; vocabulary building; use of reference materials; skill in following directions.

Grade 11. Summarizing from several sources; note-taking; analysis of

patterns in paragraphs; techniques involved in problem-solving.

Grade 12. Critical reading.

The principal limitation of such a sequence is that it seems to parcel out instruction over the high school years, whereas a sounder procedure is to practice and maintain all the important reading skills during the entire span of years. Critical reading, for example, should not be postponed until the senior year.

Reading-within-the-English-class is a satisfactory beginning. A cooperative administration will provide for in-service training, an effective evaluation program, and for growth beyond the English department as efforts are made to coordinate skills instruction in other content areas.

Reading classes that are an extra for all pupils raise the question of how to find time in an already full schedule. Corrective classes, restricted to the students most in need, raise problems of identifying and selecting these students. Solutions to these problems are suggested in the descriptions of programs below.

The shortcomings of any program which is less than total are evident. Even when instruction is provided for all pupils, provision for the transfer of skills to the content fields is usually unsatisfactory. Classes that are corrective or remedial in nature are emergency measures. They do nothing to raise the quality of reading instruction throughout the school. It should be remembered, however, that the four types of programs described here as compromise plans are intended as stages of development along the way to the all-school program.

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING PROGRAMS

In the remainder of this paper, very brief descriptions of promising programs will be given. Other excellent programs are described in books by Simpson (8), Blair (1), and Strang, McCullough, and Traxler (9). At the end of this paper is a list of schools whose programs are described in available sources.

In an effort to obtain up-to-date information on present practices as well as suggestions for setting up programs in grades nine to twelve, a questionnaire was sent to 293 senior high schools in thirty-four states in the spring of 1956.[1] These schools do not represent a random sampling. Many were selected because leads from various sources suggested that programs might be in operation. Returns from 147 schools responding to the questionnaire give an indication of the types of programs in current use:

Reading taught in:	*No. of Schools*
English classes only	32*
English and special reading classes	19
Special reading classes only	10
No program for reading instruction	86

**Includes schools where English is part of core*

Questionnaires from the eighty-six schools reporting "no program" ex-

[1] The writer is indebted to Miss Ruth Viox, secondary school reading consultant in Kenmore, N. Y., for the use of information from this study.

pressed a need for a program; some described beginning steps or future plans; some indicated that reading is taught by individual teachers.

Programs with Reading Coordinator

In systems where a secondary school reading consultant is available for leadership and direction, strides are being taken toward the desirable objective of an all-school program. Cities like Philadelphia (34), St. Louis (9), and Detroit are creating valuable patterns for total organization of large systems.[3] The Detroit program, in operation since 1944, looks to all teachers to accept responsibility for teaching reading skills in their special fields. At the present time, reading is taught in all literature classes. A few classes have combined literature and social studies with emphasis on reading. Some special reading classes are offered in place of literature periods. To schools embarking on new programs, the coordinator offers the following suggestions: secure, first of all, cooperation of the administrative staff; look for skilled elementary teachers of reading; reduce class load; acquire plenty of materials; provide in-service help to teachers.

Coordinating a reading program in a central school district presents problems comparable to those found in city systems but peculiar to a different geographical setting. In Valley Stream, New York, a corrective program for retarded readers was set up seventeen years ago. Today, in the two six-year high schools, corrective and developmental services and a summer reading school are available. The program is staffed by a district reading coordinator and three full-time reading teachers working through a Reading Laboratory. In September, all new entrants, students referred by staff members, and students formerly in corrective classes are given the Gilmore Oral Reading Test. Priority for corrective work goes to students of average mental ability in critical need of help in word analysis. Students with problems in the areas of meanings, study skills, and rate of reading (in that order) are accepted in the Reading Laboratory as far as scheduling permits. Students come to the laboratory during study periods at least twice a week. Groups vary in size from one to twelve. Instruction terminates at any time that the reading teacher feels sufficient progress has been made. Generally poor achievers in reading spend at least a semester in the laboratory; others with specific weaknesses spend from ten to twenty sessions. No credit is given.

In building the developmental program, the reading coordinator and consultants are working with all teachers in the following ways: (a) discussing the school-wide testing program; (b) giving demonstration lessons in the classroom; (c) visiting classrooms to evaluate progress of former Reading Laboratory pupils; (d) helping teachers to organize reading groups within the classroom; (e) evaluating materials in all subject-matter areas; (f) constructing or supplying instructional materials; (g) helping to build classroom libraries. The summer reading program serves as a workshop for teachers who participate, and an in-service course in reading is offered almost every year (39).

[3] Information from Miss Viox's study.

Laying the groundwork for a developmental program by providing continuous in-service training is the major objective, too, in a small city system such as Norwalk, Connecticut. At the present time, reading is taught as part of the core program in the junior high school, and in the senior high school all subject-area teachers are responsible for the skills needed in their courses. In addition, two special reading classes are offered: one for retarded and one for superior readers. Set up as regular English classes, they meet five times a week for fifty-minute periods. Students are chosen on the basis of standardized test results, class achievement, teacher judgment, and data from cumulative records.[3]

English Workshop

Coordinated by the supervisor of language arts, the program in language arts in the Oakland, California, schools emphasizes reading as one phase of communication. Accordingly, the plan provides for (1) attention to specific reading skills and technical vocabulary in all academic classes; (2) developmental reading in English classes, with emphasis on guided reading for pleasure and personal growth; (3) English workshop classes for retarded readers. Selection of students for the workshop classes is based on a difference of one year or more between reading age and mental age and on recommendations of teachers and counselors. These classes meet one hour daily for one semester as a substitute for English. Success of the workshop program, which is now in its fourth year of operation, is based on excellent in-service training that has included a four-week summer workshop for teachers (33).

Combined Attack in Small System

In a small New York State high school (Gouverneur), an English teacher became the reading consultant six years ago. Beginning with "corrective" and "efficiency" classes, the program now includes reading instruction for all students in grades seven to twelve in the English class where twenty minutes each day are given to skills instruction and directed reading. In addition, corrective classes are scheduled in grades seven to nine for pupils of average to superior ability reading two or more years below grade placement. In grades ten to twelve the "efficiency classes" are open to superior students (eightieth percentile or above in intelligence). Emphasizing efficient reading and study skills, this course is organized around centers of interest. Students are introduced to twenty-one fields from which they select five for specialization. In this growing program, experiments are now under way in three other aspects: an experimental core class in the seventh grade; a reading homeroom in the eighth grade; and reading clubs meeting twice monthly in both the junior and senior high school.[4]

Laboratory Programs

A dramatic initiation of an all-school program began in Indianapolis as an experiment in improving speed, comprehension, and interest in reading

[3] *Op. cit.*

[4] *Op cit.*

through laboratory methods. In each of eight high schools a reading laboratory is equipped with workbooks and readers, the Iowa Reading Training Films, and twenty "shadowscopes" (a type of pacer). A specially trained director is in charge of each laboratory. Scheduling varies from school to school, but in general, students work in the reading laboratory for at least one period a week as part of their regular English courses. In one school, the program was concentrated in a three-week period of daily classes with results that warrant continuation of this plan. Evaluation of the program during the first year, when control groups were set up, showed consistent gains in speed and comprehension for the experimental groups. The Indianapolis program in the spring of 1956 was reaching 21,998 students in grades nine to twelve (24).

In Eugene, Oregon, a laboratory or workshop course is open to all high school students as an elective. Any student who wishes to improve his reading may apply. Since class size is limited to twenty, and only three classes are offered, some students are placed on a waiting list. In the opening week the Iowa Silent Reading Tests are given. Each student corrects his own test, and the nine parts are explained and discussed as a method of self-analysis. Each student works on his own self-improvement plan. When common needs are recognized students may work in teams. A folder of work accomplished serves as a record of achievement and as the basis for conferences with the teacher (18).

CONCLUSION

This review of current practices in secondary school reading programs was drawn from the replies to 147 questionnaires in a recent study and from descriptions of more than thirty programs appearing in the professional literature since 1940. The following conclusions seem justified:

1. No school claimed to have achieved a total developmental program.
2. Very few schools have attempted to achieve an all-school program by a direct attack on the reading skills in each academic area.
3. Most important to the development of a total program is a coordinator who can provide in-service training for subject-matter teachers.
4. "Developmental programs" (in the sense that reading instruction is offered to all students) are generally confined to the English department.
5. Most schools feel the need for remedial or corrective classes to care for the most seriously retarded readers, but few are satisfied with just a remedial or corrective program.

The variety of existing programs is evidence of a vigorous effort to "do something" about reading problems in the secondary school. There is a growing conviction on the part of secondary school personnel that teaching reading is their job. Specific steps are being taken to prepare whole faculties for assuming this job. In the meantime, needs of students are being met at least

in part by emergency measures that will either disappear altogether or become very minor aspects of the *all-school developmental program.*

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WHAT DOES RESEARCH REVEAL

About Practices in Teaching Reading?

Constance M. McCullough

THERE IS no paucity of suggestions for ways of teaching reading. Ideas are free and numerous. One encounters famine only when one asks for methods of scientifically proven worth. The purpose of the present article is to provide a brief summary of practices in teaching reading which research findings support. Armed with this information the secondary school teacher should be able to make wiser judgments about the use of students' time in reading instruction.

Throughout many of the studies consulted there runs the thread that we get what we work for consciously; that if both students and teacher are aware of specific goals, those specific goals are more apt to be reached. Along with this finding, however, runs the danger that narrowly conceived goals produce limited results. We must work for specific goals consciously, but those specific goals need to encompass a broad definition of reading skills if the product is not to be dwarfed and distorted.

DEVELOPING VOCABULARY

Who Should Be Taught?

The idea that we should teach only those students who are below a certain score on a vocabulary test has worn out its welcome. The high school years are years of tremendous vocabulary challenge and a time when all students can benefit by help and encouragement in vocabulary development. However, it does not follow that all students need the same kind of help nor help in the same kinds of vocabulary problems. We need to take an initial inventory of the student's vocabulary development—his knowledge of words and word-relationships, his ability to determine the meaning of a word in context or out of context, his ability to analyze the form of a word by various useful techniques. When we have such an inventory of knowledge and skills, we are ready to determine who shall be taught what (116).

Which Words Should Be Taught?

One of the most recent lists of words to be taught is one by Kyte (55) designed for adult illiterates. It

contains 663 words derived from a combination of other lists. These should be useful in the preparation of simplified material for seriously retarded students.

Words selected for special study, however, should be drawn largely from material that the students will be reading anyway, and should be taught as the need arises (44).

What about Word Meaning?

We should use many means of clarifying the meaning or meanings of a given word. We need to discuss with the students not only the technical words peculiar to our fields but the common words which have a different, technical meaning—words such as *consumption* and *demand* (87). A study of the multiple meanings of words is definitely rewarding (88). Students should be encouraged to study words in context to determine the particular meanings used (87). The task of classifying words gives students an increased appreciation of word relationships and a fuller understanding of meaning (20).

What about Word Form?

Research has pretty conclusively laid to rest the idea that one must study Latin in order to learn English (75). Indeed, knowledge of root words, while helpful, is not nearly the panacea it was once thought (9). The study of roots needs to be supplemented by other types of word study, such as the study of suffixes (105) and prefixes (98). Stauffer has identified fifteen particularly useful prefixes: *ab*, *ad*, *be*, *com*, *de*, *dis*, *en*, *ex*, *in* (into), *in* (not), *pre*, *pro*, *re*, *sub*, and *un*. These, of course, would not be the only ones to be studied on the high school level but might be considered a minimal list. Knowledge of structural elements in words (prefixes, stems, suffixes, compound parts, syllables) is important in the development of vocabulary (49).

Phonics is also important. The study of the sounds of word elements should employ words the student already knows by sight (116). To teach phonics through unknown words is to multiply trouble. This fact suggests that phonics drills and pamphlets unrelated to the students' regular reading material probably employ words with which the student is unfamiliar and are therefore not the best materials to use for training in phonics.

Some students on the high school level have a laborious way of figuring out every word they read but are able to recognize very few words at sight. Research shows that words familiar in meaning are more readily learned, and that frequent observation of a word does little good unless meaning is attached to it (76). In other words, it is good to make a word a part of a student's speaking vocabulary before expecting him to learn it quickly as a sight word. Further, it has been found that the more use a student makes of a word and the more emotion-rousing value the word has (*mother*, *affection*), the more readily it is learned as a sight word (31). Of course, we cannot give a clammy word emotion-rousing value if it hasn't any, but those words lacking in emotional meaning can be used in student discussions until they do have substantial meaning and familiarity.

What Methods Should We Use?

The literature on teaching vocabulary is peppered with the controversy

over whether a direct approach to word study is superior to a casual approach. The direct approach is one in which lists of words or sentences containing words are studied deliberately for the development of word power, whereas the casual or incidental approach involves the study of words as they happen to occur in material the students are about to read or are currently reading. Both methods have value, and probably neither should be used to the exclusion of the other. The casual learning of word meanings increases vocabulary (40). But the direct method has been found to be more effective (67), and especially so with pupils of low ability (37).

In direct teaching careful pronunciation of the new word is important (108). Preferably the teacher should face the class so that the appearance of the lips in forming the word will aid the impression. Since a multisensory impression of the word is more effective, it is desirable that the class repeat the pronunciation of the word as they look at it on the blackboard, in some cases even to trace it with two fingers on the desk as they look at it (78). It is probably better for the teacher to write the word in front of the students and pronounce it again in syllables as she writes it rather than to have it already written (2). Wide experiences with the word (88), including oral activities using the word (20), reinforce the learning. Seeing the word in many contexts improves recognition (68).

Word form analysis seems best taught by the inductive method (116). As students learn or relearn techniques of word study, both of the form and of the meaning, they need to be helped to make systematic attacks on new words (88, 49). Sometimes a list of things to observe about the meaning of a word (its use in the sentence, the meaning of its prefix, suffix, stem, or compound parts) and about the form of the word (does it have a recognizable prefix, stem, suffix, compound part; does it begin with a letter sound that I know; does it contain a phonogram I know; where are the syllabic divisions) helps the student to go through the inventory of techniques he knows until he finds the methods that work on a particular word. Such lists breed confidence: I know — things that may work.

DEVELOPING COMPREHENSION

What Kind of Job Are We Doing Now?

There is considerable dissatisfaction (not confined to the United States) with the extent to which schools develop reading comprehension. Test evidence suggests that some schools do not do enough to maintain or develop certain types of reading skill (94). This may be due to the fact that some teachers teach reading for the main idea for three weeks and then neglect it for thirty, or that some teachers think they have taught it when they teach one lesson, or that others think they have taught it when they have merely required it without explaining *how* to do it, or that teachers actually do not teach comprehension techniques at all.

Some investigations have shown that, while we have apparently developed fact readers, we have failed more or less to develop thoughtful

readers. The higher thought processes, such as reading to make comparisons or to draw conclusions or to infer, are influenced by prejudice (65) and emotion (74). Students are incapable, by and large, of divorcing their own feelings and preconceptions (15) from the content and intent of the article read. College students have been found to be weak in sensing the author's intention, detecting irony, understanding difficult words, interpreting allusions and metaphor, and appreciating the influence of context on word meaning (15).

While one research study (16) concludes that it is less rewarding to ask intellectually challenging questions of slow-learning students than of bright students of the same mental age, the distributions of achievement overlap so extensively, the number of students involved is so small, and the matching of groups so limited that it would be unwise to generalize. It is probable that slow-learning students can be discouraged into not using their heads when they read, educated to read only facts. Before passing final judgment it would behoove us to give every student material at his level of understanding and experience in attempts at higher thought processes, and continue to ask thought-provoking questions of all students. They will all vote someday. A further criticism is that students have not learned versatility in reading. They tend to develop a habit and read everything in that one way (19).

What Types of Comprehension Should We Teach?

Davis identifies the following types of comprehension: selecting appropriate meaning for a word or phrase in context, following organization and identifying antecedents and references to it, selecting the main thought, answering questions explicitly answered in the passage, answering questions answered in the passage but in different wording, drawing inferences, recognizing literary devices, identifying tone and mood of the passage, and determining the writer's purpose, intent, or viewpoint (29). Wishful thinking has been that the elementary school can teach these types once and for all, or that the English teacher on the secondary level can be responsible for the mastery of these types, but the research facts are that these skills have different emphases in different fields (95) and need to be studied in each field (5) as the need arises (119). Furthermore, although there are high correlations between students' performance on these various types of comprehension, the fact remains that students vary in their mastery of the different types and profit by attention to those in which they are deficient. Therefore, we must test for the different types of comprehension to find out the kinds students need, and then teach for those specific types.

What Materials Should We Use?

It has long been a cliché that, in order to understand material well, students must be given material "at their level." That is to say, one cannot comprehend something which is written in a strange vocabulary, in sentences too long for one's mind to encompass, in a context that assumes experiences one has not had, and in a complexity of organization that requires a mentality beyond one's own. This has been, and still is, the main support for differentiated reading material—the use of dif-

ferent books for different students studying the same topic and coming together to share impressions. It has long been known also that familiarity with a subject and interest in it make the reading easier. This last fact has given encouragement to people who feel that a student can read anything successfully, no matter how hard, if he is interested in it; but doubtless this is an extreme interpretation which can be believed only if we do not evaluate the resulting comprehension thoroughly.

In choosing materials, we should seek those of high interest value. Intrinsically interesting material yields better comprehension, better speed of reading, and a fuller response to questions about the content (13). In those instances which allow us no choice, we probably must still depend upon our ability to bewitch and inspire with our own unaccountable enthusiasm.

What Methods Will Prove Productive?

Purposeful listening has a small but significant effect upon reading skill. Students who are read to after being asked to listen for a main idea, for certain kinds of facts, or to decide outcomes of a situation improve in those kinds of thinking when they read something of comparable difficulty themselves (60). There is probably, therefore, some virtue in having the teacher or student read something aloud if the audience has a specific comprehension task in mind and is held responsible for it in subsequent discussion.

Most of the teaching of reading, however, must involve reading; and, as previously stated, we get what we work for (12). If we wish students to be able to comprehend graphs, we must teach them how to read graphs related to the material they are studying. If the material is easy enough for the student to comprehend, the graph will be, too (62). If we wish students to develop the habit of wide, free reading, we shall encourage it; but we shall not expect wide, free reading and discussion of that reading to develop all the types and depth of comprehension for which we are responsible (11). Believers in wide, free reading and believers in intensive reading must meet on a middle ground.

Literary appreciation does not emerge as a by-product of increased reading skill (86). If students are to learn appreciation, it must be by direct attention to facets of literary merit.

Vocabulary and comprehension are improved to a certain extent by the use of reading in a core program (109). However, slow learners do not improve so much in such a program as might be hoped or expected. This fact brings us again to the need for direct instruction to complement such a program, and to the suspicion that it is the low level of our ambition for the better students rather than their ability to grow entirely without direct instruction that makes us think only the slow learners need it.

Because inadequate experience background is a handicap to comprehension (14), the students can profit by discussion among themselves and with the teacher before they attempt the reading about ideas, characters, or situations quite strange to them.

Oral reading skill needs to be maintained on the high school level by frequent use, but the passage to be read should be prepared in advance

and read to an audience that has a real intellectual reason for listening (81). Both oral and silent reading benefit by being given a purpose in advance. To teach students to read for different purposes we must set different purposes with them at different times (19).

DEVELOPING SPEED OF READING

What Is the Nature of Speed of Reading?

Speed in reading is made possible by efficient left-to-right eye movements, few and short fixation pauses (91), and efficient return sweep down to the next line. But these, in turn, are made possible by reading power (48), which is composed of the skills that have been previously discussed in this article. Efficiency in reading is more a matter of assimilating material after it gets to the brain than it is of sheer mechanics (96). It depends more upon vocabulary, ideas, and meanings than upon monocular or binocular vision, perceptual span, or eye movement (53). This is not to say that the mechanics of reading are not important but rather to say that when we concentrate on the mechanics alone to improve reading speed we are asking the tail to wag the dog.

A student reads material differing in difficulty at different speeds because of comprehension problems (25). Regressive eye movements over the line of print occur, slowing the reading, when thought is interrupted and the student attempts to re-examine the line for lost meaning (10). Different types of subject-matter alter both comprehension and speed (58); a poem tends to decrease the speed and challenge the comprehension more than does an article in the same vocabulary and on the same topic.

Students need to learn to adapt their speed of reading to the type of material and the purpose for which they are reading it (3). Better readers tend to adjust their rate according to their ability to comprehend, whereas poorer readers read easy and difficult material at the same rate regardless of their purpose (17). It is true that eye movements are the physical means whereby these adjustments are made; but eye movement patterns in reading are more characteristic of the individual possessing them than they are of the difficulty of material he is reading (69). For this reason it may be unwise to attempt to alter eye movements directly (69).

What Kind of Job Are We Doing Now?

The research literature is full of studies showing that groups of students, given instruction to speed their reading, gain in reading speed. Groups are formed in various industries, so that adults dissatisfied with their speed, either in reading on the job or in reading at leisure, may have instruction. A recent survey from fourth graders through adults out of school showed that the ability to skim was not well learned. Wide differences in this ability were found at each grade level (38). Apparently we could do a better job of teaching our students when and how to read faster.

What Are Artificial Methods of Increasing Speed?

There has been a great debate for many years over whether reading

speed may be fostered as well by artificial methods as by natural methods. Artificial methods are those which employ mechanical devices, such as tachistoscopes, metronoscopes, flash meters, films, or other types of rate controllers. Natural methods are those which use books and other reading material and encourage the students to increase their speed through interest, knowledge of speed techniques, and sheer will-power.

The main concern of the "natural method" enthusiasts seems to be that, when speed is developed artificially, comprehension is neglected. But the Harvard Reading Films, used with comprehension checks, have produced improvement in both rate and comprehension (90). In other words, perhaps a student, reading as fast as he can with his present comprehension and vocabulary, cannot improve his understanding of a passage by reading it faster; but a student who is reading more slowly than he needs to or can, with his present comprehension and vocabulary, can read faster and still understand. There is such a thing as reading so slowly that connections between ideas are lost. There is a question, however, of whether the greater comprehension gained through emphasis upon speed is really better understanding or simply more ground covered and thus comprehended.

Nelson has claimed that comprehension improves with the use of the metronoscope because the machine forces a reduction in regressive movements and length of fixation (70). However, Cosper reported one of the few studies to follow up students trained on a mechanical device. He found after two years that a good share of speed gains was retained but that comprehension gains disappeared (27). A system of underlining parts of a passage to show which portions would be stressed orally (oral peak stress), once reported to be helpful in increasing comprehension, has been unfavorably reported in the past year. Not only did it seem not helpful but experts were unable to agree on the parts to be stressed (42).

Whatever the fate of comprehension, favorable speed results have been evident in many studies featuring a mechanical approach to reading (4, 72, 117, 103, 113, 18). Opponents of the artificial approach have been equally numerous. Three investigators, two of them reviewing the entire research in this area, concluded that training in eye movements does not seem to aid comprehension (91, 107, 112). Others have expressed the opinion that there is no exceptional value in the use of mechanical devices to control eye movements during the reading process (44, 115). It is thought that a large part of the improvement in speed or comprehension is due to motivation (44). The implication is that if teachers have not broken the handles off their motivators, they should be able to achieve equally good results by a natural method.

What Are Natural Methods of Increasing Speed?

It has been proved that a natural approach to reading, emphasizing comprehension as well as speed, can result in improvement in both speed and comprehension (21). One investigator, using passages of non-technical prose, timing the students' reading one minute twice a week and counting the words read, found rewarding this pointed at-

tention to reading speed (3). Speed training seems to be most effective, however, when it is directed toward clearly defined jobs, requiring the students to note the comprehension requirements of the reading job and to determine the speed warranted by them (32). In a short course of twenty-one hours' duration, a very recent investigation showed that a book-centered course is more effective than a machine-centered course in increasing speed. The mean difference in speed between the two groups was fifty words per minute (104).

Probably both the artificial and the natural approaches to increasing reading speed have value (9, 60, 36), but three points need to be made clear: (1) It probably is not necessary to invest in mechanical devices to increase reading speed if we offer students materials in which they can develop it. (2) There is no evidence to support the practice of giving speed exercises solely to the gifted or solely to the slow learners. (3) Training on mechanical devices runs the danger of emphasizing *speed for speed's sake*, oversimplifies in the students' minds the really complex job of adjusting speed to purpose and material, and reduces the amount of time spent in natural reading situations in which the results are broader. If mechanical devices are used, they should be used with temperance. This has not been typical of their history so far.

DEVELOPING TASTES AND APPRECIATIONS

How Much Voluntary Reading Is Done?

As long as students keep reading, there is hope that their tastes and appreciations will improve. How much do they read? At junior high school ages there is an increase of free reading followed by a decline in the senior high school years (93). Adult reading habits thereafter seem to follow the patterns established before college is reached. Family patterns, socio-economic status, intelligence, and school experiences are largely responsible for the formation of these habits (52). As a key person in a student's school experience, the teacher needs to be aware of ways of helping a student to form good habits and to make good choices of his reading matter.

What Do Students Read Voluntarily?

Students tend to be more interested in contemporary and public figures in the sports and entertainment world than they are in the past (6). Their reading choices tend to be immature (28, 80, 24, 79). In newspaper reading they prefer sports, comics, and the front page; in magazines their preference is the picture magazines (7). They read the lighter magazine content (79), which requires less than their vocabulary development warrants (1). While some comic books appear to be of good quality (61), many popular comic books and strips give pat interpretations of life and stereotypes of society (97). Students appear to be more concerned with such themes as adventure, humor, and love (99) than with the artistry or truth of the writing. Twenty years ago an investigator concluded that little in students' leisure book reading helped to develop judgment, discrimination, or criticism (26). In some schools

little has been done to stimulate wide reading or to improve its quality (22).

What Procedures Are Useful?

Students do not just happen upon books on topics of interest to them; they must be helped to find them (41). Certainly it is even less probable that they will happen upon well-written books on those topics. We must take class time to guide book selection.

Students' preferences should be studied for the clues they give to better book selection. For instance, the factors of appeal in a favorite comic strip should be sought in better reading materials, so that the student may be led from the reading of the comic strip to the reading of the better material (106). In addition, present adolescent interests, such as contemporary events (83), humor, or vocational values (83), should be satisfied with books on these topics (45).

We must make books easily accessible if they are to be read (66, 56, 61, 71, 77). Furthermore, we must allow time for reading these books in the classroom (56). Students of low mentality may prefer reading a whole book, though small, to reading a short article or story, because of the sense of accomplishment it gives them (39).

Silent reading in the classroom should ultimately be followed by discussion of what was read. Students experience therapy in discussing objectively some of their own living problems as they are presented in books (85). Misunderstandings of other cultural groups can be rectified through reading and discussion (92). At times, a class may decide to pursue a topic through a variety of reading materials. Elements of propaganda, organization, and style can be featured especially well in this way. Activities such as panel discussions, debates, and sharing of parts read aloud for special purposes give vitality to the reading program and help teachers avoid the checking techniques which so often detract from the pleasure of reading (77).

One of the old standbys in developing appreciation has been oral reading by the teacher or a student of something well expressed. Teachers who have used this method will be glad to know that listening has a place in the reading program. Listening to radio drama, students retain as much of a story as they do by reading it themselves (43). Participation in choral reading of a selection all enjoy is another helpful technique.

But certainly it should be remembered that taste and appreciation require more than opportunity; they require direct teaching (86). Students shown, required to find, and encouraged to produce in their own writing examples of good quality will graduate from high school with a better understanding of literary quality than will those who are left to graze at will. Students presented with a good and poor passage and required to explain the differences in quality will be more sensitive to the merits of good writing. Students prodded to think about the deeper meanings in a passage will become dissatisfied with superficial writing.

GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION

Administrators have attempted to simplify the problems of the high school teacher by homogeneous grouping, putting students of a certain read-

ing ability together in one class. This practice is believed to ease the strain of meeting great differences among students. Parents and students, especially students of superior reading ability, have been favorable toward it (34). A drawback is that the practice gives the teacher a false sense of security, for differences remain (84). For instance, the teacher may have fewer reader levels to consider, but may have as great a variety of skills in need of remediation or development. Of course, too, the better the teacher, the greater the differences become; students apparently alike in achievement level at the beginning of the term become more and more disparate as the course proceeds. Therefore, teachers working under the homogeneous grouping system need to appreciate that no one-book, one-method approach is justified.

In every good reading program some of the activities should involve the whole class, some a small group, and some the individual (33, 46, 101). In each case, individual needs are served (47); for the individual may need to share something with the whole class, learn something with the help of others in a group, or prove that he knows something by doing it himself.

Grouping, itself, is a method of individualizing, not a way of escaping responsibility. Six types of grouping for reading instruction have been identified (101): achievement grouping, in which a student reads with others material which is easy enough for him to read but which contains some challenge requiring the help of the teacher; special needs grouping, in which students needing the same kind of skill work on it together with the teacher; team grouping, in which two or more students work on a skill together without the aid of the teacher; tutorial grouping, in which one student who knows a technique helps others who do not know it; research grouping, in which students curious about the same information seek it together in reference sources; and interest grouping, in which students having the same hobby or preference in recreational reading share ideas. In achievement grouping the teacher provides a systematic, year-long instructional program, reviewing and building important skills.

To determine the achievement groupings and materials to be used, teachers frequently give a test. It is important that the total test score not be used as the measure of reading level, partly because tests do not agree on reading level (73) and partly because it is the difficulty level of material successfully read that most concerns the teacher (64). Membership in such an achievement group is important for each student, even though some students may spend less time with such a group than others. Gifted students often have been neglected in this respect, with a resultant achievement in skill below their natural promise (100).

EVALUATING GROWTH IN READING SKILLS

Popular practice in evaluation has not kept pace with the enlarging concept of the complex of skills and appreciations that reading is. Many schools still measure the success of a reading program with a test of general vocabulary, something called comprehension (usually an over-simplifica-

tion of the total task), and something called speed – adding to this the number of books read by each student, the width of his smile, and the foot-candles of glint in his eye when reading is mentioned. In fact, the erroneous claims of the virtue of one method of teaching reading over another may well be traced in part to the inadequacy of the evaluation instruments used in the experiments.

To evaluate properly today, the teacher needs to know what he starts with and what he achieves in the end (111, 23, 110). Evaluation must take place at the beginning of a course, should be informally engaged in during the course (23), and should be made again at the end. Its scope should include such matters as breadth and depth of vocabulary; breadth, level, and depth of comprehension; study skills (30); ability to analyze words in and out of context; reactions to reading; literary appreciation (50); reading interests (82); reading habits in and out of school; the adjustment of speed to varied purposes and materials; and self-evaluation in the form of test-analysis, record-keeping, and expressions on the part of the student about his own sense of progress (15, 118).

Some teachers are fearful of the clerical impossibility of keeping track of the skills of 200 high school students; but if we remember that study of the results of evaluation is learning for the student who does it, and that knowledge of his status in the various skills is the best possible beginning for an intelligent attack upon his own needs, we shall recognize the fact that evaluation is a necessary, worthy use of class time.

The improvement of reading is, throughout, a matter of teamwork. It is promoted best when it is in the hands of educators well aware of the research guideposts and cognizant of the breadth and depth of their responsibility.

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WHAT DOES RESEARCH REVEAL

About Reading and the High School Student?

John J. DeBoer

WE KNOW today that reading is not an isolated skill, but a complex ability that is closely interrelated with the general personal development of the individual. Physical well-being, emotion, thought, mood, experience, rate of general maturation, and similar factors are all involved in reading growth. For this reason, no study of the reading process is complete without a close look at the characteristics and needs of the learner himself.

Winnowing from the now vast professional literature about the adolescent and his reading those generalizations which have general acceptance is no easy task. Much of the research is inconclusive; some of it is contradictory. This article undertakes to report a number of facts and interpretations about young people which may throw some light on the difficult task of helping them to read better.

THE CONCERNS OF HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

There have been numerous listings of needs, characteristics, "developmental tasks," and concerns of adolescents. Among those commonly described are the following:

Physical Development

The chief task of the adolescent, of course, is to grow into adulthood. Part of this task is performed with the benevolent cooperation of nature itself. The boy or girl who enters into the period of puberty and sexual maturity has little to do with the changes that occur in his or her muscular, skeletal, glandular, and physiological makeup. But the individual's attitude toward these changes may make a great deal of difference in his social behavior and general outlook. Especially adolescent boys are much concerned about being "normal" in physical dexterity. For example:

"Among adults it is often difficult to realize what it means to an adolescent when through illness, late development, or other factors, he is unable to play a usual part in the physical activities of his fellows. Such a boy may turn his interest to other goals. It is a critical question whether, in so doing, he will lose contact with his classmates, or, on the other hand, will find a socially adequate use of such favorable traits as he may possess. When it becomes feasible for the teacher to provide guidance in such situations, the adolescent appraisal of physical prowess need not be accepted as an inevitably sound scheme of values . . . ." (24)

Personal Appearance

Many youth of high school age have anxiety about their physical appearance. Poor complexion worries many adolescents, both boys and girls. Being "unattractive," too fat, too thin, too tall or short worried seventeen percent of respondents in one study (8). In another study (11) the responding male youth expressed concern about complexion, lack of beard or heavy beard, scars, irregular teeth, protruding or receding chin, large or protruding ears, and even freckles! Female respondents named similar sources of anxiety, although none seem to have been disturbed by the beard problem.

Being Accepted and Loved by Parents and Peers

Tryon puts it this way: "The peer group, whether it is a neighborhood play group, a social clique, or a delinquent gang, offers the child or adolescent greater continuity in terms of time, and more understanding than he finds in adult-directed groups . . . Next to the family in childhood, and probably equally with the family during adolescence, the peer group provides satisfactions to the basic urges for security in the warmth of friendship and the sense of adequacy that come from belonging. . . ."[1] Thus also the security of the home and the love and guidance of parents remain important, even while the youth strives to gain emotional independence from his parents.

Having Confidence in Himself and His Own Abilities

Many factors operate to promote feelings of insecurity among young people. The imminence of military service, conflicts between cultural standards of the older and younger generation, conflicts between ethnic and racial groups, fear of not being accepted by the peer group, anxiety about vocation, and the contradictions in social examples and ideals make many an adolescent wonder whether he can measure up to the expectations of those to whom he looks for approval.

Assuming an Acceptable Sex Role

Since adolescence marks the beginning of strong sex interests, it is a period of stress and often of perplexity because of the young person's normal sex desires and the restrictions placed upon him by the moral standards of the adult society. The new problem calls for a kind of intelligence, judgment, and quality of character never before required in the child's expe-

[1]Caroline M. Tryon, "The Adolescent Peer Culture," *Adolescence*. 43rd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1944), p. 236.

rience. Moreover, he is called upon to enter into socially approved roles for boys and girls which, whether justified or not, are essential to happy accommodation to our culture (17).

Developing an Acceptable Set of Values, a Faith for Living

Young people are concerned, not only about how they will make a living, but also how they will make a life. Underneath the surface frivolity of adolescent youth, there is usually a strong desire to come to terms with the realities of life and to find a path to direct their ways. They want to know what things are of most worth, what their feelings about human beings should be, what constitutes real success, and how they can best bend their efforts toward the achievement of their cherished goals.

In this connection it is interesting to note the revival of an old-fashioned idea that has been given scientific respectability in an important new volume by Daniel Prescott (25). This student of child development rehabilitates a word long shunned by psychologists—the word "love." With his permission we quote a part of his discussion of love in the development of children and youth:

"Some seven years ago I was quite bothered by the fact that the term 'love' occurred so infrequently in psychological writings dealing with human motivation. Scientists seemed to have a deep distrust of the term. This led me to read extensively in psychiatric literature in the attempt to discover whether love is a genuine human reality or only a romantic construct within our culture, for cultures do exist in which love is not practiced. My search was very rewarding and led not only to the conclusion that love is a genuine human reality but also to the conviction that it plays a most important role in human development. Very cogent affirmations of the nature of human love appear in the writings of Harry Stack Sullivan and Erich Fromm.

"Perhaps it will be worth the space here to include a brief summary of my conclusions regarding the nature of love so that teachers may know what to look for in relationships between parents and children. Valid love seems to include the following components:

1. *Love involves* more or less *empathy* with the loved one. A person who loves actually enters into the feelings of and shares intimately the experiences of the loved one and the effects of these experiences upon the loved one.

2. One who loves is deeply *concerned for the welfare*, happiness, and development *of the beloved*. This concern is so deep as to become one of the major organizing values in the personality or self-structure of the loving person. Harry Stack Sullivan wrote, "When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own security, then the state of love exists."

3. One who loves finds *pleasure in making his resources available* to the loved one, to be used by the other to enhance his welfare, happiness, and development. Strength, time, money, thought, indeed all resources are proffered happily to the loved one for his use. A loving person is not merely concerned about the beloved's welfare and development, he does something about it.

4. Of course the loving person seeks a maximum of participation in the activities that contribute to the welfare, happiness, and development of the beloved. But he also *accepts fully the uniqueness and individuality of the beloved and,* to the degree implied by the beloved's

maturity level, *accords* to the latter *full freedom to experience, to act, and to become what he desires* to become. A loving person has a nonpossessive respect for the selfhood of the loved one."

By permission from D. A. Prescott, *The Child in the Eduative Process* (New York: McGraw-Hill), pp. 357-358.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The foregoing discussion undertook to describe some of the common concerns of high school youth. But the differences among the youth are perhaps as important as the characteristics which are common among them. The young people differ widely in their height, weight, color of hair and eyes, temperament, background of experience, intelligence, socio-economic status, and in every other identifiable characteristic. They differ especially in their reading interests and abilities.

Differences in Reading Ability

All teachers are aware that their pupils differ widely in reading ability, but few are familiar with the astonishing range of the differences. Most pupils in American high schools are grouped roughly according to chronological age. In the typical eighth grade English class, therefore, we are likely to find a range of eight or more grades in reading ability. Thus in one study (21) it was reported that among more than 50,000 eighth grade pupils only fourteen percent had eighth grade reading ability. Eight percent had less than fifth grade reading ability, and almost seven percent had twelfth grade reading ability. The rest were distributed between these two extremes. The sample is so large that it is reasonable to assume that these differences are typical of high school students generally.

Other studies yield similar results. In a St. Louis study only slightly more than fourteen percent scored at the eighth grade level, while thirty-seven percent scored above, and forty-eight percent scored below the eighth grade level. Of 4,236 eighth grade graduates, eighty-six scored below the fourth grade level, and ninety-nine scored at the thirteenth grade level or above. Just about as many of these students scored at the ninth grade level as the eighth, and far more of them scored at the seventh grade level than at the eighth (20). Apparently, knowing that a pupil is in the eighth grade, or a graduate of the eighth grade gives no clue to his reading ability.

Ernest Horn reports an extensive study of the reading comprehension of 6,000 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade children in a variety of school systems.[2] He found that the lowest score in grade eight was as low as any in grade six. The range of ability in grade seven was eleven times the difference between the medians of grades six and seven. The difference between the best and poorest pupil in the middle half of grade seven is nearly three times as great as the difference between the medians of grades six and seven.

That the range of abilities is equally wide in various sections of the country is illustrated in another study.[3] Simp-

[2] "Current Issues Relating to Reading in the Various Curriculum Fields," *Recent Trends in Reading*, Supplementary Educational Monograph No. 49 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939).

[3] Ray H. Simpson, *Improving Teaching-Learning Processes* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 19[illegible], p. 289.

son compared the spread of reading ability among 565 tenth graders in a large midwestern city and of 380 tenth graders in a Southeastern city. The grade distributions for both groups resembled those in the other investigations.

The range of differences in reading ability represents only one aspect of the problem. Students who score at the same grade level vary widely in the nature of their difficulties and needs (23).

The existence of such a wide range of reading ability is not to be deplored. Even many experienced teachers often feel that the wide differences are unusual, and try very hard to bring the very retarded pupils "up to the norm" or to the appropriate grade level. Obviously if they succeeded in this endeavor the class average itself would rise, and the range of the class would be greater than ever. The purpose should not be to bring the most retarded "up to the norm," but to help every child to read up to his full capacity. Individual differences are increased, not diminished, by good teaching.

There is no way of escaping the fact of individual differences in our classes (and, consequently, the need of adapting instruction to individual differences). We can keep the element of chronological age constant. Many people think that children learn best in association with their age mates. But if we do, the spread of reading ability will be very great. We can keep the "reading age" constant. But if we do, the range of chronological age, social maturity, and special abilities will be very great. In any case, it will be necessary to deal with individuals. At the same time, however, we must be concerned about the social experiences of the children. The conclusions are inescapable: (1) our groups must be socially compatible, and they must be reasonably homogeneous in physical maturity and general development; and (2) we must provide for individual instruction, permitting each child to master the needed skills at his own rate.

Sex Differences

Girls are generally superior to boys in reading ability, especially at the elementary school level. While boys tend to excel in such subjects as science, arithmetic, and history, girls are more proficient in all kinds of verbalistic activity. Apparently these differences are not attributable to any differences in the intelligence of boys and girls, but (1) to the slower maturation of the boys, and (2) to the cultural influences which assign diverse roles to boys and girls. Certainly the number of boys in remedial reading groups and clinics far exceeds that of girls, often by a ratio of ten to one. Moreover, larger numbers of boys than girls of the same chronological age appear to be unready for beginning instruction in reading.

Socio-economic and Cultural Differences

How well the child succeeds in reading depends in large measure on what he brings to the printed page. His attitudes toward people, books, and school itself; his stock of meaningful impressions; his knowledge of language; his vocational aspirations and prospects—these and many other factors will determine the degree of his success in reading. All of these are profoundly affected by his social, economic, and cultural background.

For example, the part of town in which a child lives will affect his standing in the community, the way in which others think of him, and the way he thinks of himself. If he comes from the district on the "other side of the tracks," he will not only lack many of the images and concepts he encounters in his reading, but he may lack also the self-confidence and the motivation which are needed for successful reading and which the child from the "Gold Coast" is more likely to possess. The child of first or second generation immigrants, often the butt of cruel nicknames, may feel inferior academically to his age mates of native stock. Especially if he comes from a bilingual home, he is likely to be at a disadvantage, since the average performance of bilingual children is lower than that of monolingual children. (Please note the word *average*, since also in this respect children differ widely.)

Family income, too, plays a large part in the child's attitudes toward his peers, not only as a result of the amount of money he has to spend, but also as a result of the social standing of his parents. In a typical school the differences in family income are very great. For example, in Illinois, according to the 1950 census, the median family income was $3,267, with nineteen percent of the families earning less than $2,000 per year, and 28.1 percent of the families earning $5,000 or more per year. The fact that even in a fairly homogeneous wealthy community the children of the business executives sit side by side with the children of the family servants is a tribute to the democratizing influence of the public school; but it also presents an instructional problem of the first magnitude.

Low social, economic, and cultural status interferes with all school learning, but especially with learning to read. Unfavorable conditions at home have been shown to be a major factor in many cases of reading retardation (27). It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the school attempt to supply the favorable conditions of which children are deprived at home. These conditions include an abundance of good, attractive books, suitable physical surroundings, time and encouragement to read, and an atmosphere of acceptance, security, and affection.

That the school can succeed in overcoming the effects of unfavorable social, economic, and cultural conditions in the teaching of reading has been repeatedly demonstrated. However, superior educational statesmanship, imagination, adequate facilities, and skilful teaching are required to cope with the reading problems of children who live under these conditions.

READING INTERESTS[4]

The interests of young people are as varied as the young people themselves. They are the product of many interrelated factors—intelligence, general maturity, home background, geographical location, past experiences, cultural opportunities. These interests vary in kind, diversity, and intensity.

[4]The section on reading interests is quoted in part from the author's article in *Reading in Action* (Nancy Larrick, editor.) Conference Proceedings of the International Reading Association, 1957.

Happily, they can be kindled, sustained, enriched, redirected, and heightened through skilful guidance.

The interests of young people are characterized by change as well as range. They change from one generation to the next, and of course they constantly change within individuals. Not only increasing maturity and experience, but external events and social change affect profoundly the interests of youth. Who knows what combination of factors caused the progression from the Charleston to bebop and rock 'n' roll? The causes may lie deep in the fears and uncertainties of our time.

Obviously the subject matter that engages the interest of young people will reflect the changing aspects of the passing scene. Aviation and space travel may have their basic appeal in youth's immemorial love for adventure, but the specific forms of these interests are derived from inventions of the last half-century. If girls are turning today to stories of careers for women and read less about domestic scenes, it is because women have entered into industry, business, and the professions on a scale not known before in Western culture. If junior high school girls wear lipstick earlier than ever before, it may be because they sit up late enough to ponder the Revlon commercials. Surely the interests of youth are in large part learned interests.

Each generation, each great social change, finds its reflection in literature, including the literature for children. The greatest of the literature survives the generations and the social changes, but the more ephemeral books serve important purposes. New issues arise and old ones die. The old titles are forgotten and new ones take their place. Thus Charters found very few titles that continued at the head of the list of best-liked books for boys over a period of thirty years. Only three survived throughout the period—*Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Treasure Island*. More, of course, have survived as favorites with many children and youth. *Robinson Crusoe*, *Little Women*, *The Five Little Peppers*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Heidi*, *Hans Brinker*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *The Call of the Wild* are examples. But just as it is right for our impressions of reality to keep fading as new ones constantly make their impact upon us, so the books, the chief conveyors of these impressions, are properly and promptly replaced and forgotten. Only those with universal themes that transcend specific events or periods survive.

In all this diversity we do, however, find traces of unity. Despite the wide range of individual interests and the changes that occur outside and inside the reader, certain general statements can be made safely. A great body of research on children's interests has been accumulating over the years. While some of the findings are inconclusive or contradictory, certain major conclusions may be drawn from the numerous studies. Thus at the junior high school level the themes of adventure and humor command well-nigh universal appeal, while the theme of romantic love, particularly as found in adult fiction, is making a strong beginning in the affections of the young. From these studies, as well as from informal observations, we know, too, that there are sharp differences between the interests of boys and girls. Boys like vigorous action—exploration,

pursuit, conflict, triumph, surprise. They like the David-and-Goliath type of story, the real life or fictional hero in either the Edison or Daniel Boone category. Often they enjoy stories of sports and science. Many come to love Stevenson, Dickens, Dumas, Mark Twain. Girls, on the other hand, read stories of home and school life, romantic love, careers for women, mystery stories, and sentimental fiction. Girls are more likely to read boys' books than boys are to read girls' books.

Curiously, the factors of intelligence and socio-economic status do not markedly affect young people's interests. Bright and slow-learning pupils tend to like the same kinds of books, movies, and radio and television programs. Of course, the age at which they acquire the various interests will vary, and the quantity of reading is greater in the case of the brighter pupil. The reading of comic strips and comic books is very much the same among pupils of varying levels of intelligence. Moreover, the choices of adolescents among the various media are similar in the various socio-economic classes. Many investigators comment upon the poor quality of the selections made by many youths. Fiction predominates over non-fiction in the voluntary reading of junior high school students. And, contrary to common opinion, the amount of voluntary reading is approximately as great among boys as among girls. The interest patterns of young people in reading are strictly individual, the product of hereditary, maturational and environmental factors, all interrelated and interactive.

Perhaps the most significant of the findings relating to young people's interests is the fact that voluntary reading reaches its peak at about age 12 and tends to decline during the senior high school years. It is comforting to know that with this decline appears also a sharp lessening of interest in the so-called comic books.

It should be noted also that the particular medium of communication does not essentially affect the nature of young people's interests. The appeal of the content, rather than the specific medium of communication, is the determining factor in young people's interests.

Nevertheless, we cannot overlook the revolutionary effect of television upon the lives of children and youth. Paul Witty's annual surveys of the TV viewing habits of the young are startling and fraught with significance for the teacher. If it was thought in earlier years that TV viewing would decline after the novelty had worn off, we now know that this has not been the case. For example, in 1950 Witty found that children devoted twenty-one hours per week to television viewing. In 1956 it was still twenty-one hours. Fortunately TV viewing falls off during the high school years, and we may reasonably assume that the decline begins in the junior high school.

Much discussion has centered about the question of the effect of television on the reading habits of young people. The reports have been contradictory. Some librarians think there has been a decline in the amount of young people's reading. Others report that reading among children and youth has reached record heights. Here again we must deal with the fact of individual differences. Certainly some boys and girls are reading less because of the hypnotic charms of the TV screen.

Others, however, have been introduced to new worlds of knowledge and imagination, and are now reading more. Witty's latest study suggests that nearly half of the children read more than before the era of TV. Soon a comparison will not be possible because TV will have been an accepted part of children's lives since their earliest memories. It is hard to know whether one should pity or envy them.

A good general characterization of young people's interests in reading has been given by Berry: "In this adolescent period, reading interests are broad. Students are beginning to wonder what it feels like to give one's life to religion, to be poverty-stricken, to be corrupt in politics, to die, to give birth, and to fight lions in Africa" (4).

INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN READING AND OTHER FACTORS

Reading and Intelligence

As most teachers know, there is a high correlation between reading ability and intelligence as measured by existing tests. While it is true that many students of average and above-average intelligence do not read well, and many more fail to read up to their capacities, in general the brighter students are the better readers (Traxler, p. 65). The correlations range between .40 and .60. Since most intelligence tests involve reading tasks or at least linguistic ability, such high correlations are to be expected. Some evidence suggests that the correlation between intelligence and reading rate is low (3).

Reading and Emotions

A close relationship exists between reading and personality problems (42). It is not clear whether personality problems cause reading difficulties or whether the reverse is true. Some investigators stress the crucial role of personality and emotion in reading retardation. Certainly it is true that family relationships play a major part in many cases of reading difficulty (Robinson). It is probable that there is frequently an interactive relation between the two factors (43).

Other factors such as physical development, diseases, sensory acuity, socio-economic status, bilingualism, and experience background have been studied in relation to the reading problem. A summary of the research on all of these would carry us beyond the purpose and scope of this publication. It has been our purpose merely to describe some of the major findings of research workers relative to the characteristics of the student in reading in the secondary school.

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About Materials for Teaching Reading?

Helen Hanlon

IN THE SCHOOL curriculum reading receives major emphasis: in the public press the teaching of reading receives attention. Much of this emphasis in the curriculum is good, justified; much of the publicity in the press is misleading. The pressure in the early years for the child, every child, to learn to read, whatever his level of development, has many drawbacks—for the child, for the curriculum, for the teacher. Pictures of the reading program so often presented to the public are frequently inaccurate, purposely or inadvertently. Part of the responsibility for the inaccuracy is directly traced to the school which does not always use the perfect, and ready-made, communication line between home and school. When the children understand, from earliest school days on through high school, what they are learning and the relationships of their learnings, when they are encouraged to take parents into the school situations, then the school program will have fewer criticisms. There will be fewer generalizations made from too few cases. The greater understanding by the public of the school's purposes may enable the school to make greater progress in gearing its program to the whole population. For schools often *know* better than they *do*, being stymied by adverse comments when they seek to re-evaluate or retool their programs. All of us can cite examples of how much has had to be done to sell a new plan to a school community. Even programs of reading readiness, or groupings for better classroom instruction, or special classes for taking care of the gifted or the retarded—even these have had to be approached cautiously.

Teachers at the various levels of the schools need to be part of the better communication system, also, so that they will know, from their pupils and from their personal observation of the work of each other, what the steps have been in readying a child for reading, in helping him to acquire grade by grade the complicated skills of reading, so that he can use these skills as needed in many situations now, and so that he can advance to the rigors of his reading needs in later study and work.

The foregoing is by way of saying that schools need publicity for, and understanding of, the excellent work that is being done in teaching reading. The fact that teachers in the secondary schools seek suggestions on methods and materials for dealing with reading

in their classes does not imply that all children are poor in the skill. Rather it means that teachers are caring for the individual child with all resources at hand, and that they are alert for further help. Secondary schools are recognizing that specialized skills in reading are needed in each class of every subject area.

The program of reading in secondary schools seeks to provide a wide range of services—from helping the retarded reader to reach better control of reading skills, through special groups within a classroom or in remedial classes, to helping the more able pupils to greater skill and maturity in their literature classes or in such courses as Great Books, as well as in classes stressing reading efficiency at a high level. The depth reading done by pupils in the special literature classes provides a method to be used in serious reading, in study, and in problem solving.

For all these purposes, research says that we must provide a wide variety of interesting reading materials, at all grade levels, and with purposeful activities—in order to give pupils the satisfactory experiences in which skills in reading are developed, maintained, and improved. The following pages mention a number of such materials. In a field in which there are as many programs of reading as there are people carrying them on, it is foolhardy to attempt an inventory of materials. Inevitably, some of the favorite materials with which some teacher has had special success will be omitted, so the writer has listed only books, workbooks, pamphlets, and equipment which she has used or with which she is personally familiar. Limitations in the listing are hereby acknowledged.

MANUALS AND TEXTBOOKS

In groups within a class, or in entire classes devoted to building skills in reading, workbooks have been used successfully. The several manuals of *Getting the Meaning* (1) develop phases of reading comprehension, word meanings, central thought, details, organization, summarization, and are designed for both junior and senior high school. Classes using the workbook, *Reading Skills for High School Use* (2), get needed review of basic work in phonics, word meanings, interpretation, use of dictionary. For plotting of individual progress in speed and comprehension the McCall and Crabb *Standard Test Lessons in Reading* (3) are useful to high school students. Another reading improvement series is the *SRA Better Reading* (4) by Elizabeth Simpson, each book of which contains articles or stories of similar reading level, with comprehension questions, so that there is heavy practice given at a known level, from fifth and sixth grade in Book 1, through eleventh and twelfth grades in Book 4. A new series of workbooks called *Be a Better Reader* (5) is designed for remedial or developmental instruction in skills needed for reading the variety of texts and references commonly used in high schools.

Diagnostic and practice materials for developing specific skills are provided for high school and college in such books as *How to Become a Better Reader* by Paul Witty (6) and *New Trails in Reading* by Carol Hovious (7). Taking a poor reader into the

plan of reading instruction to be set up for him is done in the new *Reading Skills* by Wood and Barrows (8), in which the first chapters are addressed to the pupil in order that he can understand the source of his problem, and then find satisfaction in helping himself to find solutions as he follows the program of purposeful exercises and activities presented.

Literature textbooks are now making provision for the levels of readers by including selections covering a wide range, in such books as *Exploring Life* and *Ourselves and Others* in the Holt series called *Our Reading Heritage* (9) and the new two-track program for the *Adventures in Literature* series by Harcourt (10) in which two texts in the same field present the literature on two reading levels. In early grades the Lyons and Carnahan readers (11) are using two books with the same reading material but different vocabulary and sentence length for two reading levels in a class. Taking cues from the acknowledged usefulness of the teacher's guide provided with readers in elementary schools, all of the publishers have been providing excellent helps in the way of guides and testing manuals for use with literature books for upper grades and high school. For example, with *Adventure Bound* (12) and *Journeys into America* (12) are two such valuable manuals, a "Teachers Guide and Key" and "Reading Practice and Review Tests," which are typical of the effort now being made to give teaching aids.

OTHER MATERIALS

Adaptations of novels have been popular in recent years for use with slower readers at secondary school level. Some of these are "classics": *Jane Eyre* (13), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (14), *The Prince and the Pauper* (15), *The Black Arrow* (16), *Treasure Island* (17), *Lorna Doone* (18). In the same category of high interest and low reading level are the easy historical biographies published by Wheeler: *Buffalo Bill* (19), *Chief Black Hawk* (20), *Davy Crockett* (21), *Kit Carson* (22) are a few titles in this *American Adventure* series. These books and the series called *Childhood of Famous Americans* published by Bobbs-Merrill (23) are for the middle grades of the elementary school but they have been of great value to the slow readers in junior high school because of their attractiveness as well as their level of reading. Also popular are *Desert Treasure* (24) and *The Adventures of Canolles* (25) by Helen Heffernan, both of which are of high interest level. Probably no books have taken classes so by storm as the *Teen-Age Tales* (26) which present short stories of great appeal to teen-age readers. In both junior and senior high schools the *Let's Read*, Books I, II, III, IV (27), have been very successful in developing various skills in reading.

Magazines designed for school use have provided many classes with some good reading on current affairs at the children's level as well as with the impetus for good speaking and writing activities: *Junior Scholastic* (28) for upper elementary and junior high school; *Senior Scholastic* (29) for junior and senior high school; *Read* (30)

for junior high school; and the special student's edition of *The Reader's Digest* (31), which contains an insert with exercises in rate, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Using the format and short stories of the *Reader's Digest* is the *Reading Skill Builder* set (32) which has been used successfully in both junior and senior high school. As a continuation at a higher level, and for widening the reading experiences of young people, some schools use the readers called *Secrets of Successful Living* (31) with its selections adapted from *The Reader's Digest*.

Sets of individual titles on themes or areas of interest, carefully selected as easy reading, are very useful with older boys and girls of both junior and senior high school. There are many helps available in choosing such books. A few are listed here: Appendix B in Harris' *How to Increase Reading Ability* (33) and *Good Books for Poor Readers* (34) by George Spache; the reading lists published by the National Council of Teachers of English: *Your Reading* (35) and *Books for You* (36); and a delightful volume by Phyllis Fenner, *The Proof of the Pudding: What Children Read* (37). The great usefulness of sets or kits of books on a theme has been demonstrated in many classrooms. When the themes are vital, and the books selected are of many reading levels, it is possible to provide adequately for the various reading abilities represented in the class. Last year a set of reading lessons, from third through twelfth grade level, was developed for high schools. It is called the *SRA Reading Laboratory* (38), a portable kit with individual reading lessons on cards, practice lessons, comprehension tests, listening tests—all in excellent form for individualized lessons. The range of use made of the *SRA Reading Laboratory* is wide—from remedial lessons with a few children and a teacher, to a whole class in remedial instruction, to a regular class in which the children use the kit to develop, on an individual basis, their reading skills.

The number of mechanical devices used in Detroit schools is limited. For training in advanced reading skills in upper grades of the high school, the *PDL Reading Program* (39) has given some good results. It is an improvement program which includes reading exercise booklets, reading matter on filmstrips to be used in the projector called the *Perceptoscope*, with practice, evaluating, and recording materials. For increasing eye span and speed of perception the *Keystone Tachistoscope* (40) projector is used at many grade levels. *The Controlled Reader* (41) uses filmstrips in an adapted projector to increase speed of reading, elementary through high school, and follows a definite plan of progression, grade by grade.

The variety of purposes of the high school program may be illustrated in the following descriptions of two programs of reading in the same high school:*

> The Great Books course consists of close analytical reading of the selections . . . with the purpose of discussing in class the surface and depth meanings of the readings as well as the significance of the readings to the students' own lives. The students are given daily assignments from the readings and are asked to turn in each day an analysis of the previous night's reading. This analysis stresses the key ideas of the writer and

*Denby High School, Detroit

the significance of these ideas to the reader. Each day, the teacher serves as the discussion leader who seeks through pertinent questions to draw from the students an oral analysis of the previous night's reading. In the "give and take" of the discussion, the students learn from each other. Aside from the daily papers and discussions, the students are given examinations and are asked to write longer papers when certain readings have been completed. Outside readings are reported orally, and individually, by the students. (After reading and discussing the assigned Platonic dialogues, six students presented a panel discussion on Plato's *Republic*.)

. . . . . .

The class called Accelerated Reading lasts six weeks. The sessions are conducted by the teacher who describes technique and directs practice exercises and practice periods. A sample lesson is the one on how to read for main ideas. The first day the instructor defines this skill and discusses its importance in reading. Students then try their skill on a diagnostic exercise to determine their weaknesses, if any, in grasping main ideas. (Their concepts may be too narrow or too broad or unrelated.) Then the main idea skill is discussed at some length with the class. The second day students practice recognizing the main idea of a paragraph, a chapter, a book. The third day students practice recalling and stating main ideas for themselves, avoiding the pitfalls described on the first day. The main idea formula is given. The fourth day the concept of the author's placement of main ideas in writing is discussed. Then students analyze writing for patterns of thought. This is just one of the comprehension skills that is taught during the course. Other skills are taught and tested daily and simultaneously. As students start the course, they are tested in speed, comprehension, main idea concepts, detail memory, ability to draw inferences, and vocabulary. They are retested periodically during the course and at the end of the course to determine their progress. Each student keeps his own progress record daily. No homework is given other than practice the student wishes to do on his own. Practice reading material from *Reader's Digest*, *Harper's*, and *Atlantic* is used as well as material selected from college texts and exercises which the instructor adds. Incidentally, students gain on an average about 10% in comprehension and double their speed of reading in six weeks' training.

We need the great variety of reading materials. We are finding them available at every level, and from many sources, for our use in the rich program being developed in our secondary schools.

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